the United States and work. We want to know who you are, where you live, the members of your family, and where you work. That is what the President proposed, and that is what they want to stop.

We would continue the current situation with millions of undocumented people working without background checks, working without any registration to this government, so we know their whereabouts and what they do. That is what they want to end. They think the President went way too far in setting up this process. I think they are wrong.

The Republicans had a chance to pass a comprehensive immigration bill and they refused. In refusing, they left the President no alternative. He is trying to make sense out of a broken immigration system. It would be better if the Republicans joined us in the House and the Senate in a bipartisan effort to achieve that.

The last point I want to make is this: I think one of the most heartless things I have seen in my time in the House and Senate is the effort by the Republicans to end DACA. DACA was the protection the President gave to DREAMers. DREAMers are children brought to America—children, infants, toddlers, and young kids—by their parents, who grew up in America and went to school, have no serious criminal issues in their background, and who simply want the chance to be part of America's future. That is all they are asking for.

The President's Executive order gives them that chance to prove themselves, and the Republicans want to eliminate that order. I don't understand it. If they take the time to meet some of these young people, they would realize what a waste it would be of such great skill and talent and love of America.

I will close—and I see my friend and colleague Senator MURRAY—and say this: We are a nation of immigrants. Our diversity is our strength. The people who are willing to risk everything in their lives to come to this country, to be part of this great American experiment, to have an opportunity for their next generation to have a chance for a better life, that is what defines us. That is who we are.

I stand here—and I have said it so many times and proudly so—the son of an immigrant mother who was brought here at the age of 2. She was the first DREAMer in my house, and she raised a son to serve in the U.S. Senate. That is my story. That is my family's story. That is America's story.

It is time for us to fund the Department of Homeland Security and protect America and then have an honest debate about an immigration policy consistent with American values.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Illinois for his passionate remarks. That rings so true to all of us. I thank him for all his work on the DREAM Act and making sure young people who are raised in this country have the opportunities that all of us do.

As we count down the final days before funding for the Department of Homeland Security potentially runs out, I want to take a few minutes to talk about how we got to this point. As this deadline gets closer and closer, I have been continually reminded we have been down this road many times before. This is a manufactured crisis, and it is no different than so many others we have faced in Congress over the last few years. What is happening in Congress right now is not a debate over government spending policies or priorities. That much is certain. This is not a debate over how the Department of Homeland Security should function. It is certainly not a debate about our national security. This is, pure and simple, a political fight Republicans are having with themselves across the two Chambers of the Capitol and across the different factions of the Republican Party. That is not the case for every Republican in the Senate. Several Members have said clearly we should fund the Department of Homeland Security without any strings attached.

The fact remains some Republicans are making it clear they are willing to hold hostage the basic operation of our government over rightwing politics and nothing else. While this process might seem complicated, it is actually very simple.

Democrats—along with national security experts, law enforcement experts, State and local officials, and three former Secretaries of Homeland Security, including two Republicans—want to do nothing more than fund the Department of Homeland Security cleanly, no strings or unrelated political amendments attached. But because they are so angry about the President's actions months ago to improve our country's immigration laws, some Republicans are demanding to pass a bill that will tear apart families who are working hard to make it in America, put our security at risk, and seriously threaten all of the work we have done recently—including the budget agreement I reached with Congressman PAUL RYAN—to keep our government functioning. That is not only bad policy. It doesn't make any sense.

The bill passed by Speaker BOEHNER and House Republicans would be devastating to families across the country, and it would make day-to-day operations for the Department of Homeland Security needlessly difficult. For example, TSA agents who work to keep our airports safe and secure would be forced to work without pay. These men and women should be worrying about doing their jobs, not knowing whether they are going to be able to pay their bills and put food on their table. That is not what we want them worrying about. But because of political pressure from the extreme anti-immigration, rightwing party, that is what Republican leaders in the House are demanding.

This looming shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security has become to them nothing more than collateral damage. The national impacts of not funding the Department of Homeland Security have been discussed for weeks now. This would also cause problems all the way down to individual fire departments in our local communities.

Right now the Whatcom County Fire District 18 located in my State—close to the northern Canadian border and it is about an hour north of Seattle—is applying for an assistance to firefighters grant which is funded through the Department of Homeland Security. This is a very rural fire district. They only have one paid employee—it happens to be the fire chief—along with a volunteer firefighting force of 16 and a volunteer EMT force of 6.

They have applied for a very small $24,000 Federal grant to replace their heavily used and outdated equipment—everything from boots and helmets to gloves and fire hoods—that are now over 11 years old. I have been working with them to help them get that needed equipment which protects those volunteers who put their lives on the line to save others, but if Congress does not fund this department those grants are at risk. That is unacceptable. It is proof this political mess the Republicans have made is not a hypothetical problem. It is something that will have real impacts on every one of our communities across the country.

My colleagues are not going to give in and let the Republicans play politics with the Department of Homeland Security. For years now we have seen that strategy doesn't work. It holds us back. I am encouraged the majority leader has said they are willing to bring up a clean Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill to the floor. We need the same commitment from the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Time is running out. The country is waiting. We need to fund Homeland Security.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE APPROVAL ACT—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the President's veto message on S. 1, which the clerk will read and which will be spread in full upon the Journal.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S. 1, a bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the veto message on S. 1 be considered as having been read; that it be printed in the RECORD, spread in full upon the Journal, and held at the desk; and that the Senate proceed to its consideration at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader but no later than March 3.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The veto message of the President is printed in today's RECORD under ''Presidential Messages.'')

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, a number of things have been happening today with regard to the funding for the Department of Homeland Security. There has been a lot of spin that somehow the Republicans are blocking the funding of the Department of Homeland Security. This gives new meaning to the word obfuscation, I suppose, or disingenuousness.

The truth is the House of Representatives has fully funded the Department of Homeland Security. It has provided the level of funding the President asked for. It has kept all accounts in Homeland Security as approved through the congressional process. It simply says: Mr. President, we considered your bill—this amnesty bill—that would provide work permits, photo IDs, Social Security numbers, Medicare benefits, and Social Security benefits, and you can't do that. We consider that and reject it. So we are not going to fund that.

Now, the President has already told us and the staff they have across the river in Crystal City where they are leasing a new building, and this building is going to house 1,000 workers paid for by the taxpayers of the United States as part of Homeland Security. Are those 1,000 workers going to be utilized to enforce the laws of the United States? Are they going to process applications for citizenship or visas? No, those 1,000 people—costing several hundred million dollars, in truth—are going to be processing and providing these benefits to people unlawfully in America.

So Congress said: Wait a minute. We didn't authorize money for that. You can't spend money to fund exactly the opposite of what we have enacted. So we are just going to put some language in the bill—the normal bill that funds Homeland Security—and say you can't spend the money to violate the law. You can only spend the money to enforce the law, as it was created to do.

The bill then comes to the Senate; and what spectacle do we have? We have Democratic Members in lockstep unity blocking even proceeding to this bill, contending we are not funding Homeland Security. Can you imagine that?

Now, my colleague, the senior Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, the Democratic whip, came down a couple of weeks ago and said: I am trying to figure out what is blocking this bill. So I took the floor and I said: Senator DURBIN, you and your filibusterers are filibustering the bill. That is why it is not being passed.

Does anybody want to dispute that? The Republican Senate has repeatedly brought up this bill and filed cloture to move to the bill so we can fund Homeland Security, and the Democrats are relentlessly and unanimously filibustering it, blocking even moving to the bill. Although Senator McCONNELL said if we did move to the bill, he would allow them to have amendments. So this is the situation we are in.

Colleagues, this goes to the core of our constitutional principles about who controls the money in America. Congress is a coequal branch. It is not subordinate to the President. If anything, the legislative branch, through the Constitution, provides maybe even more power to Congress than it does to the Executive and more than it provides the courts. And the most powerful power of Congress is the power of the purse.

Congress is not obligated to pay for anything it believes is unwise, and it has an absolute duty not to fund anything that is unconstitutional or illegal, which is what we are dealing with here. So Congress—the House of Representatives—acted wisely and properly in funding Homeland Security and not allowing activities to be carried out that are unlawful and that Congress has rejected.

This is so fundamental, so basic. How my colleagues have the gall to come to the floor and have a press conference this afternoon and blame Republicans for shutting down Homeland Security is beyond me. I don't believe the American people are buying it.

Now, there are some, even on the Republican side, who say: Oh gosh, the President will blame us even if it is not our fault. So we might as well cave in and give him what he wants. But what he wants is something he can't be given. What he wants is for Congress to capitulate and erode its powers and responsibility. He wants Congress to violate its duty to fund something that is illegal and contrary to Congress's wish-

es. He can't demand that. He has no right to demand that.

Congress cannot fund—cannot and must not fund—an illegal action in hopes that another branch of government will intervene. Now, I say that because some have said: Well, a court in Texas has ruled that a part of this action by the President is unlawful. The court was narrow in its decision. It fundamentally said something similar to: It looks like a regulation to me, and if you are going to pass a regulation, you need to go through a process. And the President didn't go through a process. It is not lawful. It is not legal. You can't enforce it. The judge issued an injunction barring the President from carrying out these plans, he announced, which is plain law, it seems to me. They didn't even go into some of the other ideas of the constitutionality and separation of powers. He just blocked it on that basis.

So we are hearing it said that we can fully fund Homeland Security without any restrictions, allowing the President to do this, because the courts stopped it. I think that is unwise for a number of reasons. The first one is we don't know what the courts are going to do. This Congress has a duty to fund only things it believes are appropriate and lawful. So Congress shouldn't fund it on that basis, period. We should stand up for Congresses in years to come—for our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren—and defend the power of the purse and defend the integrity of this Congress.

We know how this country was founded. It was founded on an understanding of the British Parliament, and the British Parliament wrested from the king the power of taxes and money. That was a huge historical development, and it has been part of our tradition since, that Congress has the power of the purse. The Executive can't do it. So we replaced the king with the President, and we adhered in our Constitution to that great tradition of restraint on the Executive by the legislative branch—by the Congress, by the Senate.

In the Texas court's injunction, let me go further and note the reasons why I think it is unwise for Congress to say that we, the Senate, have no duty to speak on this issue. The House has already spoken and said we are not going to fund this. But the Senate needs to ask what its position will be.

I would point out that the Texas court's injunction addresses only a part of Obama's lawless actions and could be lifted at any time. So the injunction could be lifted at any time. It only covers a part of his actions. If Congress relinquishes the power of the purse, then nothing will be able to prevent the lawlessness or amnesty from going forward.

As the Texas court noted in issuing its injunction, ''This genie would be impossible to put back in the bottle.''

That is absolutely true. He is evaluating whether to issue an injunction.